

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE GROUP  
INTELLIGENCE REPORT

COUNTRY Czechoslovakia

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SUBJECT The New Constitution

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SUPPLEMENT

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letter of 16 October 1978 from the  
Director of Central Intelligence to the  
Archivist of the United States.

1. With the budget passed, the Constituent Assembly will now turn its attention to the drafting of the Constitution. A minor crisis is already shaping up, reflecting a lack of agreement among the parties. Such questions as election of the president by the National Assembly or by popular vote, the number of Ministries, the constitution of the Ministry of Information, and the position of Slovakia already are being fought over.
2. The non-Communist parties feel that Communist strength is declining; it may be expected that they will maneuver the Parliament if necessary into an impasse thus forcing new elections. In general, the Communists and the Social Democrats are seeking the widest departure from the first Czech Constitution, while the National Socialist and the People's Party want the new Constitution to remain close to the old one. The Slovak Democrats remain completely provincial and will compromise broadly in order to maintain a unique position for Slovakia.
3. Since it is expected that popular fault-finding and recrimination will increase during the adventure of the Two Year Economic Plan, current Communist tactics are intended to remind the other parties of their full responsibilities in the Government of the National Front. Public opinion, however, identifies the Two Year Plan with the Communist Party, and its shortcomings will certainly be laid at the door of the Communists. Popular judgment is rendered easy by the publication of the economic goals for the first month of the year for each industry. Even if statistics are being juggled to give a favorable impression, they cannot hide the mounting malfeasance, graft, and corruption in many branches of the nationalized industry. It is, for example, common knowledge that frequently retailers, in order to obtain goods directly from factories, are expected to add ten to thirty percent to the price as a bribe for the national manager.

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